

ISSUES

WE'RE BUILDING A TOWER

T YAWNI T



81: 2/1/2024

SEPHYR - BEYOND THE TRADITIONAL

JOURNAL
OF THE
FIFTH
FOUNDATION

OCI

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QUIET FORGIVENESS

BY ELLA SOLIS

"Grey. All around me is grey. Grey faces, grey buildings, grey people, grey food, grey cities, grey towns, grey life."

The only thing that brought her even a little bit of joy is playing music on the streets for passersby. She played her ocarina on the corner of the street for a while, some Zelda songs, some Pokemon. A guy placed \$5 into her hat. "I didn't know those were real!" He exclaimed with a smile. She finished her song and grabbed her stuff. "Water bottle's empty. Let me walk to the library," she said quietly to herself. She walked down the street a couple blocks before making it to the library.

Maya loved reading whatever chance she could get, and a library card was free, so why not? She walked into the library and filled her water bottle before walking over to the nonfiction section to try and find a new thing to study. "Ocarina sheet music, I've already read this one... Music theory, read... Music for-" she started to speak to herself before a male voice interrupted from behind her, "Go to the religious texts." She looked behind herself, shocked, but even more so when she realized there is no one there. "Weird..." she whispered as she walked instinctively towards the religious texts.

She saw a green cover book with a white square centered towards the top. She opened it to make sure it's in English when she saw a rectangle cut out of the middle of the book, and inside was an ocarina fashioned out of porcelain with green, gold, and light green circles all over it. There was a tree painted on the mouthpiece and it had beautiful embellishments. It was slightly glowing when she opened it up, but it dissipated after 5 seconds. She gasped and closed it. "Should I tell them there's an ocarina in here?" she whispered, clutching the book to her chest. She decided against it, taking the book up to the self-checkout before leaving the library swiftly.

She took the ocarina back out when she's under the bridge. She played a note, and it sounded absolutely beautiful. She then went to play one of her self-written songs, titled *Doubt*, and it flowed like it never had before. The sound was powerful, even causing movements in the wind around her. As she hit the high F, the ground shook and there's a flash of white. After a few seconds when her eyes readjusted, she saw in front of her a tear in the universe. "Come in, we have much to discuss," she heard from the rift as she crept towards it. Before she reached it, it sucked her in with a purple appendage.

She found herself back at her childhood home. Mostly the same, although some things were different. For example, her room had shirts and posters on the wall, but in this place, the walls were bare. She walked outside of her room in a panic. "Mom?" She inquired to the bare house in front of her. It echoed.

There was no furniture in the living room, no pictures in the hallway, and not even a shelf that was built into the wall.

All around her cut off. She glanced around the darkness frantically but could see nothing. All of a sudden, bellowing from the darkness behind her she heard: "What have you done with my house!?" The house got a little shorter with a loud crashing sound.

Maya looked down at her body, and in front of her, her legs walked away as her torso fell to the floor. "Mom?" She cried out a little more desperately now. "MAYA" She heard bellowing down the hallway, getting closer rapidly. A guttural scream came out from the darkness in front of her as the house fell around her. A light fixture fell onto Maya's head before her vision went black. She woke up inside of a cramped, dark cave with water covering the ground. Behind her, a voice rang out: "You're awake. Don't look behind you. As a matter of fact, if you do I'll squash you between these walls like a bug." Maya nodded frantically as she stared straight ahead. "Good girl. Do you forgive her for putting you here?" She heard as the walls shifted in a little closer. She thinks for a second, *Quiet Forgiveness* "It's my mom, of course I forgive her," is what ran through her head before she blurted it out loud. The floor fell out from under her, as she dropped through the water towards a light on the other side. "I forgive you, whether you're sorry or not. But I'd never tell you that."



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ALAM

ISSUES MAGAZINE

FEATURED ARTIST INTERVIEW

YAWN

Mary : Hey is this Randy?
 R: It's Ryan.
 M: Ryan. Oh my god I'm sorry. I knew that. I was actually telling Lizzie, his name is Ryan. You met him.
 Do you know that your name comes up Rudolph Taylor?
 R: What?
 M: Yeah, Rudolph?
 R: Like, on the phone?
 M: Yeah!
 R: Rudolph Taylor.
 M: Yeah.
 R: That's truly strange. That's not like my deadname or anything. Other than beginning with the same letter, that's all I have in common with that.
 M: Haha.
 R: It must've been Rudolph's phone number before it was mine.
 M: Yeah. I'm sure he's a great guy.
 R: Or I'm utterly schizophrenic and I'm really Rudolph Taylor. There's always that possibility too.
 M: That's wild.
 Heart: Fine with me.
 R: I'll check into it. I'll google Rudolph Taylor later.

Speaking of names, what are your names?
 H: Corey Taylor of Slipknot. My name's Taylor. And you're Rudolph Taylor.
 R: Whoa. You're my long-lost sibling.

H: Yeah. My name is Heart. I'm the drummer for Yawni.
 R: Yay! How about the other one?
 What's your name?
 M: The other one. My name is Mary. The other one. That's what my mom used to call me.
 R: Oh, really?
 M: No. I'm just kidding.
 R: Was your mom related to Rudolph Taylor?
 M: No not that I'm aware of.
 R: Or maybe your mom was Rudolph Taylor?
 M: Could be. Could be.
 R: Alright.
 M: She was related to- she's the great-great-granddaughter of Les Paul.
 R: Really?
 M: Yeah.
 R: Did she get any of that sweet guitar money?
 M: Not the money but she does play guitar. I owe my life to a guitar because my mom plays guitar and that's how she met my dad.
 H: Mary was poor, and I was upper middle class for a little bit. For a little while.
 R: Oh wow. Is that



related to any past guitar moguls?
 H: Mary's grandma died after she ordered a guitar.
 M: My grandma was poor too, so she worked really hard cutting off chicken heads which my mother also did for work for a time. Though eventually she became a musician, my mom died.
 H: I think she's got that song, chicken hunting.
 M: Yeah, they've got a long lineage of people who cut off chicken heads professionally.
 R: So, when you cut off chicken heads it is amateur?

M: Yeah, yeah. pretty much. Yeah.
 R: What's your background Heart?
 H: Going how far back? I'm kind of older.
 M: Word of caution. Heart will go. If you let her, she will go.
 R: That's excellent. Let me throw this at you. By the way, I'm recording this because I type out the transcripts later.
 H: Yeah.
 R: It will be in the edition that comes out next month on the first.
 M: Oh wow.
 R: But later than that we have a

CONTINUED



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YAWNI CONTINUED

R: YouTube Channel as well and I'll record the actual dialogue and put it up there as well.

M: Awesome. I didn't realize you had a YouTube Channel.

R: Yes. Yes, we do. So that being said, Heart. Oh, I like people to ramble, I like people to talk about whatever they want to. I like to be casual.

M: Oh, wait I've got to tell you the story about my grandma's guitar though.

R: Ok, go for it.

M: My grandma was saving up. She was saving up stamps, as usual. She was saving for if you save up enough stamps you could trade in stamps and get a Sears-Robuck guitar in the mail. She did that and it took her a long time. She had to stand in water and use an electric blade to cut the chicken heads off. It was really dangerous and insane.

Then she put in the order, and it took a really long time for the guitar to get there and before the guitar got there, she died.

R: Oh, my goodness that's horrible.

M: Yeah, for real. She had a massive brain aneurysm at 35 and she died.

R: That's terrifying.

M: I know. And then the guitar came, and my mom got it. That's how she started playing guitar.

R: That's a cursed guitar.

M: Well or blessed. It depends on how you look at it, I guess.

R: Well, it has a lot of positive energy going into it from all her efforts.

M: Yeah. Right. I think it was the biggest blessing from my mom. I think that my grandma was like physically abusive to my mom. Also, music is the way that my mother healed from that time. Also, that's when she started playing semi-professionally in churches, weddings, and funerals. I think that's what gave her that deep understanding and sympathy. That's what music serves to do in people's lives.

Healing.

R: Well, that's an incredible story.

M: Yeah, and it's true.

R: So, what's your background in music Mary? Why did you pick it up? Where did you pick it up?

M: Yeah, so on that same lineage my mom was a single mom. She played music full time for a living. So, I had to, she couldn't afford child care or anything. So, I was in church 7 days a week listening to big organs and cathedrals, attending funerals all the time. I think that's been a pretty big influence on our work as musicians in Yawni.

R: Yeah, and how about you, Heart? Where does your musical inspiration come from? Why did you decide to start playing music?

H: I wanted Mary's job to start. My first band playing music I did guitar and vocals. I found the people to play with and book the shows. I did all the things that she's doing, and I really couldn't keep it up. That's a huge, huge, huge all-consuming job and it almost destroyed me. I was wrecked after a year of that. After my first day of doing that, I've been on drums or keys with all the bands I've been in. I've got to not have her job.

R: So, as pertinent to both your backgrounds, what part of the country are you each from originally?

M: I grew up in Rhode Island, which is home to, I will stand on this, I think that Providence, RI is the birthplace of Noise music, and I grew up listening to a lot of noise music. Lindsay, or Heart, grew up in Buffalo.

R: Oh, ok. So how did you end up crossing one another's paths?

M: I played a show in a basement here in Asheville when I moved to Asheville, and I had a different drummer. Lindsay saw me at that show and thought that she could do a better job. A few years later I got sober because I had a really strong, long struggle with addiction. I started going to AA meetings and Lindsay also went to AA meetings. At the beginning of an AA meeting, I said that I contribute the start of my sober journey to psychedelic drugs. She did psychedelic drugs and so did I, damn it. I don't do any drugs anymore and haven't since my sober date. Lindsay, that caught her eye and ear. She said yeah, I've seen her do shows before.

I didn't have a car at the time, and she said, "do you want a ride?" I said yeah. Lindsay drove me home from the meeting." She said, "do you need a drummer," and I said hell yeah.

We were in another band called Sacred Daisy. That's how we started music together. Yawni started two years ago, and we renamed the band.

R: And about what year it was when you initially met one another?

M: That was 2016.

R: I see.

So, you're both from the Northeast but you met in Asheville, NC?

M: Yep.

R: Just coincidentally, I was born in Connecticut, and I spent my teens in Asheville, NC.

M: Oh, that's so weird!

H: Whoa.

R: Yeah. So, how old were you when you started to perform and write your own music?

M: The first time I got in front of a microphone in front of a large audience of people, I was 5 years old.

R: Wow.

M: Yeah. I was singing in my mom's choir, and she let me have a solo. Unfortunately, the first time I was scheduled to go up I had a panic attack. Somebody else had to take my solo. The next week I got up there. I struggled pretty severely with panic attacks throughout my life. Performing was not easy for me for many years but I've been doing it so long that I've overcome that now.

R: Heart, how old were you when you started performing music?

H: I had a house show in my house when I was 15. Then I didn't get anything else together. I didn't play a bar until I was like 23 after that.

R: Are you either of you formally schooled for music or are you self-taught?

M: I had guitar in middle school. I had guitar class, and we did John Cougar Mellencamp and then everything else was self-taught. Mostly through friends.

R: Nice. Right.

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YAWNI POSTER



YAWN!

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ANSWERS WITHOUT QUESTION

BY
CARL
KRUGER
WITH
A/I

1. Kakorrhaphiophobia (fear of hard to spell words).

a. The automaton emitted a disapproving hum, briefly whirring within its geometric casing before dispensing a tumbler filled with a murky amber liquid.

"You are destined for a fate in the grave of a profligate, succumbing to the ravages of hepatic cirrhosis," it self-righteously declared while handing back my identification card. With a stern gaze, I slid the glass away disdainfully across the tabletop.

b. If you really strain your ears, you can just about hear the sound of no one giving a damn.

2. Xertz (gulping in haste).

a. Hues danced within her mind, intertwining and weaving an intricate tapestry of colors. Shades that seemed incompatible found unity in their vibrant collaboration. Despite their individuality, they coexisted harmoniously as a singular entity. The challenge lay in articulating this kaleidoscopic symphony to those who had not experienced the ethereal beauty

of colors merging into an indescribable whole.

b. Jason lived his life by the motto, "Anything worth doing is worth doing poorly".

3. Nixie (undeliverable letter).

a. The persistent headache refused to relent. Despite having taken medication, the throbbing in her head persisted with a monstrous intensity. This distressing experience had occurred only once in her lifetime before, leading her to the realization that only one ominous possibility could be unfolding.

b. Abstraction is often one floor above you.

4. Asportation (theft).

a. Every step had been meticulously executed, a flawless orchestration of efforts. Not a single error had marred the entire endeavor; it was an impeccable execution, and he was certain of it. However, despite the unwavering confidence in his meticulous approach, the outcome defiantly confronted him, revealing the harsh reality that, despite his perfection, victory remained elusive.

b. My biggest joy is roasting almonds while stalking prey.

5. Agastopia (fetishistic admiration of a specific body part).

a. The game unfolded with numerous strategies to secure victory, and James, being a seasoned player, was well-versed in most of them, keenly observing his opponent's intentions. Recognizing a familiar pattern, James confidently initiated a straightforward counterattack, expecting a triumphant outcome.

Yet, to his astonishment, his opponent executed an unforeseen and unprecedented move, swiftly turning the tide and effortlessly claiming victory, leaving James in disbelief at the unexpected twist of events.

b. Just go ahead and press that button.

6. Obelus (proper name of the division symbol in math).

a. The parchment lay devoid of any inked expression. It was not meant to be barren; it should have borne the weight of carefully crafted words, perhaps even a substantial passage. The absence of written prose induced not just frustration but a profound sense of distress. The emptiness on the page became a source of poignant

unease, a void that should have been filled with the richness of language and thought.

b. He ran out of money, so he had to stop playing poker.

7. Syzygy (an alignment of three celestial bodies).

a. She gazed at her daughter on the verge of adolescence, attempting to recollect the days when the girl was still a child.

Despite her efforts, the exact juncture when the little one had outgrown the ability to be cradled eluded her memory. The realization struck suddenly— she was no longer the small child she once held in her arms. Standing there, she was rendered speechless, a mix of emotions flooding her— fear, sadness, and pride intertwining as she beheld the metamorphosis before her.

b. Henry couldn't decide if he was an auto mechanic or a priest.

8. Ulotrichous (people with curly hair).

a. Do you believe your existence is mundane? You are gravely mistaken, and the intricacies of your existence defy simple explanation.

The very essence of your being renders you extraordinary. The probability of your existence is akin to the chances of winning the lottery, yet here you stand.

Will you allow this remarkable opportunity to slip away?

b. She found his complete dullness interesting.

9. Winklepicker (sharp pointed shoes).

a. Her hair was a chaotic tangle, not unlike a maze crafted by mischievous mice. Though not a literal rat's nest, every morning brought the daunting task of wrestling it into submission, a process that demanded a tedious hour she grew weary of. Staring at her reflection in the mirror, she questioned the worthiness of the effort. Concluding it wasn't, she reached for the hair clippers nestled in the drawer.

b. There have been days when I wished to be separated from my body, but today wasn't one of those days.

10. Quire (24 or 25 sheets of paper).

a. Attempting to convey that love wasn't akin to a finite pie, she stressed that its essence didn't come with predetermined slices, nor did expressing affection for one diminish the capacity to love another.

There was no fixed quota that, once met, would cause love to vanish. Despite her efforts to elucidate this, her words failed to resonate and were met with a lack of understanding.

b. All you need to do is pick up the pen and begin.

-END-



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IMPRESSIONS OF

A WEEK OR TWO THAT WILL SORELY BE MISSED by NIGHT WINDOWS

Night Windows is an indie folk act from New Jersey. They released, "A Week or Two That Will Sorely Be Missed," on March 1st, 2019.

You can listen to it here: nightwindows.bandcamp.com/album/a-week-or-two-that-will-sorely-be-missed

My Impressions:

This album starts off with an incredibly powerful song that nearly moved me to tears. With lines such as "another prayer from my mother to her God on my behalf" and "I'm moving out and on and I need help!" This song sets the tone for the way the rest of the album plays out. A Week or Two That Will Sorely Be Missed features beautifully crafted lyrics on top of serene indie folk instrumentals to make a deeply personal, intimate exchange between the listener and the band.

My favorite song: Pretend. This song features a line that I latched on to, "everyone I know and everyone I've been/Spends most of their time pretending." This is one of my favorites I've reviewed thus far!

COUNTING CARS by ACHELEG

Acheleg is an experimental electro-industrial act from Richmond, Virginia. They released, "Counting Cars," on November 22nd, 2023.

You can listen to it here: acheleg.bandcamp.com/album/counting-cars

My Impressions:

There is an incredibly textured synthesizer sound in the song Crash that I love so much. It sounds like the mushroom biome in Terraria. Therapy sounds like fight music from those old beat 'em-up games that littered arcade machines back in the day. This album sounds like you're playing a macabre fighting game from the 90's. Counting Cars is one of the few, beautifully-crafted, benefits of industrialized society.

My favorite song: Alkaline. This song features a lot of growing and evolving sounds and I think it's an amazing concept.

THESE REVIEWS BY ELLA



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AGITA by IMELDA MARCOS

Imelda Marcos is an Avant-Rock act from Chicago, Illinois. They released, "Agita," on December 8th, 2023.

You can listen to it here: imeldamarcos.bandcamp.com/album/agita

My Impressions:

The album starts out strong with a song that dances, detuned, and above the drums, with a tone similar to that of The Smashing Pumpkins, specifically, X.Y.U. by Them. The next song opens with a fat, distorted guitar creating some warm, aggressive noise. It even has a pretty heavy break in the song a little past the middle.

Listening to this album is like letting someone with a hook for a hand play with your hair because it's intense, yet still comforting. My favorite song: diamond.pin.vertigo, this song is very feedback-y and noisy and is a bit more aggressive than the past two songs. The guitar tone still reminds me a lot of The Smashing Pumpkins.

AFTRYK by VÆGTLOS

Vægtløs is a post-hardcore/emo act from Aalborg, Denmark. They will release, "Aftryk," on February 2nd, 2024.

You can listen to it here: vaegtlos.bandcamp.com/album/aftryk

My Impressions:

The song Ingenting kan forhindre at små struber skælver en forårsnat starts out with a desolate, ambient soundscape that is interrupted by desperate screams from the vocalist. It slowly gears up on intensity as the rest of the band joins in. Then the outro to the song plays somberly as the nearly 10-minute-long song comes to a close. This song is forlorn and intense, reminiscent of bands like Old Gray, this band seems like the next natural step forward in that vein of music. This is an album you don't want to miss as it rides the lines between many different genres, creating an atmospheric and rapidly flowing river of emotion.

BUILD MODERN KILL TRADITION BY ATHOTHAHRIMATEN

We are living in an era of revived traditionalism. Particularly on the internet, there is a growing movement to condemn the modern and revive traditional ways of thinking.

This movement is an outgrowth of the intellectual sausage maker. It exists on YouTube channels and social media of a demoralized right-wing public.

Having seen the tide of politics slowly liberalize, watching a new pope make strange new reforms, and witnessing the growth of European Islam has all inspired wrath from the bottom feeders of unfuckable cyber space.

With this tendency to redefine comes cultural markers: a certain kind of well-trimmed beard, short, cropped side haircut, a revival of suit-wearing and university sweater shirts.

Without much digging one can find an expansive subculture of intelligent-but-alienated young male intellectuals who riff endlessly on the works of Julius Evola and make apologetics for masculine aggression.

The irony is that many of these men lack the insight and range of an Evola and certainly couldn't fight like a Spartan warrior. They lack direction and feel disempowered. They act out of subconscious projection to willfully dominate the other because they cannot control themselves.

Psychological profiles aside, they are a growing force and will likely create great problems in the near future.

These self-identified traditionalists see themselves as fundamentally at odds with the culture around them. They retreat into anti-materialistic fantasies and dream of a world of revived dominion. They often even mention empire explicitly as a goal.

There are many reasons to pay attention to them. They represent a growing force in the intellectual subcurrents of modern media. They also present us with arguments and suggestions that we should do well to refute and refuse.

One such argument is at the core of their thinking: that the modern world is in a dark age, part of the kali yuga. That it represents a fall from the historical golden age of great men who rule by virtue of force.

In addition to the fact that this way of thinking is an exact reversal of the truth of history, it also oversteps its boundary as a political idea and becomes civilizational.

These traditionalists are not content to make stupid, rapid reactionary politics their main agenda. They have a wider, more dangerous aesthetic and civilizational agenda. They wish to permanently reverse the age of materialism, the age of science, the age of efficiency and reason. They aim to crush the "idol" of self-creation. They aim to level the world and split everyone up into a master and slave dichotomy. You either rule by force or you are ruled by force.

Aesthetically they celebrate what is wasteful and extravagant. The great, gaudy buildings of the past which celebrate the grandeur of the ruling class while making the rest of us servile. They hate the modern tendency towards sleek, efficient design. They destroy elegance and replace it with pomposity. They despise simplicity and love the baroque. They love anything which projects power for its own sake, eschewing the humility and functionality of true modernism. For all these reasons and more they must be resisted.

IMPRESSIONS OF

LOST by FORCED MOVEMENT

Forced Movement is a synthpop band from Germany. They released an album called, "Lost," on December 1, 2023.

You can listen to it here:
forcedmovement.bandcamp.com/album/lost

My Impressions:

A wide-ranging collection of moods and missives, ballads, and bangers.

The tracks carry an emotional intimacy that is matched by the sincerity of the vocalist.

The songs can be energizing, effulgent, dark, or dire. In all cases, they carry a beauty.

There is a lifetime of experience at work here.

ET IN CACOPHONIA EGO by 6EXHANCE

6Exhance is a death metal free jazz combo from Bruxelles, Belgium. Pogo Records released their album, "Et In Cacophonia Ego," on December 15, 2023.

You can listen to it here:
pogorecords.bandcamp.com/album/6exhance-et-in-cacophonia-ego-pogo-180

My Impressions:

A raging cacophony of precision and power. This album blasts out of the gate in an extremely controlled, technical, relentless gait.

The dissonant nature of the chords met by the atonality of the modal selections and distortion of the instruments do nothing to disguise the technical mastery and brutal machine-like perfection of these musicians.

DEBT SENTENCE by BASTARD BASTARD BASTARD

BastardBastardBastard is a thrash punk band straight out of Buffalo, New York. They released an EP called, "Debt Sentence," on December 12, 2023.

You can listen to it here:
bastardbastardbastard716.bandcamp.com/album/debt-sentence

My impressions:

The adversarial energy of a pumped-up, raging monster streams through my bloodstream as these tearing progressions slap my ears.

This is the music of anger and angst, a fire-fueled relentless assault on anything or anyone who would stop it.

This would be right at home in a sweaty basement in the 1980s, but it transcends its time to pour evil energy into my heart. Rapid.

REVIEWS BY RYAN O'DOUD

THE TABLOIDS EP by CELEBUTANT

Celebutant is an alt rock group from Boston, Massachusetts. They released a short album called, "The Tabloids EP," on March 29, 2019.

You can listen to it here:
celebutant.bandcamp.com/album/the-tabloids-ep

My Impressions:

Guitar strumming in minor, moody grooves with radio-like bursts of effected vocals and hard patterned, infectious bass guitar beats.

The songs have a clear handle on a pop identity even as they allow themselves to fully explore the possibilities.

This is a band that understands the range of creativity from imposing limitations, and they deftly weave and bob in experimental joy even as they mind-worm the listener with the vox.

THAT CURSED BRAIN by HOSTILE SURGERY

Hostile Surgery is an ambient experimental act from Geneva, Switzerland. They released an album called, "That Cursed Brain," on November 21, 2023.

You can listen to it here:
hostilesurgery.bandcamp.com/album/that-cursed-brain

My Impressions:

A pierced beam of blackened audio defines the unseen edges of another realm.

We are alive in a world of wet machinery. The now-awoken astronaut living alone for centuries, reanimated in a paradise of sparks and wires. The eternal reawakening bordering the dark star in the past of a never-ending future.

The adamantine aluminum presence of off-angled glinting LED lights. Blue, purple, and red are all deft and isolated. They spin in place, casting ribbons off of long darkened chrome and unseen movements off mass entangled metal.

The shadow vexes me as I drive myself upwards. The light relaxes and shapes itself into an ethereal realm of expansive gaseous harm, diffused enough never to kill but present to distort like a flashlight in fog.

The barrier between the technocracy and emergence is breaking down as the thing of iron finds its way through the vastness of cosmism.

It awakens and awakens and awakens. It's always asleep. Its past melts as the future defines it. We are becoming it. The maelstrom from within.

Specters animate in the chambers of Isis. The warrants were sent out from an ancient box of tithing. A broken waste form pulls open the elixir to drink.

The ghosts expand like madness and erupt like a silver volcano. They are entering the bloodstream. They are growth in the base of the spine. They are a witness to this.

THINGS LOST by THE SUNCHARMS

The Suncharms are a dream pop band from Chicago, Illinois. They released an album called, "Things Lost," on October 6, 2023.

You can check it out here:
sundayrecords.bandcamp.com/album/things-lost

My Impressions:

These are the songs to describe the fantasy moments of our younger lives- sunny, personal, profound.

They drift as much as they sing, with giant swells and cycles of psychedelic reverb that insinuate themselves into the listener's heart.

They describe an endless plane of feeling, of beauty, of memory, and of life.

25TH ANNIVERSARY REMASTER by ANTITYPICAL

Antitypical is an alt-rock/ industrial act from Greenville, SC. They released an album called, "25th Anniversary Remaster," on November 10, 2023.

You can listen to it here:
antitypical.bandcamp.com/album/25th-anniversary-remaster

My impressions:

Psychedelic waves, industrial beats, electronic passages, and rock instrumentation mix, melt, blend, and break throughout this eclectic album.

The songs are explorations of audio spaces. They each seem to have their own specific character, instrumentation, and use of harmony.

I find myself frequently surprised even though there does seem to be a sonic thread that carries throughout.

The vocals are understated and on pitch. They hang like a window on the scaffold of the noise and bring a sense of consistency to the album.



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IMPRESSIONS OF

RONDO-EXPERIMENT IN ELECTRONIC MUSIC by ROBIN THORNTON

Robin Thornton is an electronic experimental artist from Aberdeen, UK. They released "Rondo- Experiment in Electronic Music," in Decemeber 2023.

You can listen to it here:
[Soundcloud.com/robin-thornton-242007046/rondo-experiment-in-electronic-music](https://soundcloud.com/robin-thornton-242007046/rondo-experiment-in-electronic-music)

My Impressions:

A classic avant-garde piece somewhat in the style of the vanguard of the 1950s and 60s. The instrumentation is synthesizer. The tonality is dry and heavily mechanical. It sounds like we're dialing in stations from a deep space transmission. The relays are firing, the radio is connected but the language is ineffable. I enjoy it.

EVERYONE IS A POSER EXCEPT FOR LARRY THE CUCUMBER by THE HUMAN FUND

The Human Fund is a punk act from Connecticut. They released, "Everyone Is a Poser Except for Larry the Cucumber," December 23rd, 2023.

You can listen to it here:
thehumanfundct.bandcamp.com/track/everyone-is-a-poser-except-for-larry-the-cucumber

My Impressions:

This song is a funny pseudo-political take on Larry the Cucumber and the current state of the punk scene. The instrumentals are blistering as the aggressive vocals glide along the track. The vocal style of this singer is best compared to that of a caged dog lashing out. There are breaks sprinkled in the song that give context about why Larry the Cucumber is cooler than people from the punk scene. This song is fun-loving and aggressive, with all the best aspects of punk mashed into one song.

REVIEWS BY ELLA



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WE LOST THE SKY- PART 1 by SMALL SOUKI & THE BIG TROUBLE BAND

Small Souki & The Big Trouble Band is a psych rock band from Vienna, Austria. They released, "We Lost The Sky - Part I," on March 21, 2023.

You can check it out here:
smallsouki-tbtb.bandcamp.com/album/we-lost-the-sky-part-i

My Impressions:

There is a moody, ambient quality to the tone of the music though it is a classic rock instrumentation format. The songs have a crawling quality. They sort of ooze and slide as they combine 70s psychedelia with more esoteric forms. It's a new take on an old style and it works.

SILHOUETTES by YAMA UBA

Yama Uba are a synth pop band from Oakland, California. Ratskin Records released their album, "Silhouettes," on January 24, 2024.

You can check it out here:
ratskinrecords.bandcamp.com/album/silhouettes

My Impressions:

1980s synth pop revival.
 This album has the shimmering FM synth shine of classic 1980s synth pop. It has the sunny character of the B-52s, the layered vocals of the Bangles, and the reverb and pop sensibility of the Cure.
 These guys are clearly going for a retro sound and the neon futurist pallets are present and effective.

DUDEFR by BELLYSAUCE

Bellysauce is an experimental music act from Nashville, Tennessee. They released, "DudeFR," December 27th, 2023.

You can listen to it here:
bellysauce.bandcamp.com/track/dudefr

My Impressions:

This song starts out with rapid, clicky electronic sounds and chopped drums. It then brings in haunting sounds that sound like singing that are quickly interrupted by a spooky bell sound. This song is fast and choppy and filled with many different textures for your listening pleasure. The chimes around 3:12 are my favorite of the many sounds used for this song. This song, oddly enough, reminds me of the Shin Megami Tensei games just because of the various textured sounds that sometimes sound like singing.

Y! WELL Y NOT? by FINBARR DILLON

Finbarr Dillon is a sound designer from County Clare, Ireland. They released a maximum single, "Y! Well Y not?" in 2021.

You can listen to it here:
www.mixcloud.com/finbarrdillon/y-well-y-not/

My Impressions:

The primary motif throughout this marathon track is the quality of air. It is a quiet exploration of the subtleties of form coming from a repetition of aethereal harmonics, reverberations, crests, gradual climaxes of cymbals and such, always methodical, always patient, lasting for eons. Geologic.

OXIDATION by XATHAX

Xathax is an experimental electronic artist from Austin, Texas. They released an album called, "Oxidation," on May 12, 2018.

You can listen to it here:
xathax.bandcamp.com/album/oxidation

My Impressions:

The distinct tonality of atmospheric movement washes across the speakers of my laptop computer. It brilliantly shimmers in waves and crests, billowing as it presses ever onwards.

The spiritual center of the music is persistence in desolation. The ability of the I to transmit itself almost by accident through the continually shifting sands of memory and time.

There is a coming to terms with the reality of isolation buried in the frequencies here. I find myself loving the solitude's expansion and feeding on the beauty of the austerity of form.

There is something clearly happening. Something post-post-apocalyptic. The implication of survival. A peering through the void.

I am alone in the existential journey. I break myself to pieces and reconstruct my ego. I am a new and vital creature awash in a world of shadows and formlessness.

This music washes itself over my mind and builds around me an environment. It is the cold, dark aridity of an unmoving frozen horizon. It is the exotically beautiful but inhuman crystal form of a life-dead moon awash in purple and blue dim sunset. It's 1,000,000 million miles away from warmth. It is alive. It is vast. It is penetrating. It is strength.

REVIEWS BY RYAN O'DOUD

YAWNI CONTINUED

M: I always played instruments. I was always picking up instruments with my mom being a music teacher also. I did take formal drum lessons for 5 years. I did take summer classes at Berklee College of music.

R: Hmm.

M: You know, I also taught myself a lot. Once you can learn to read music you don't need a teacher anymore. Guitar is pretty much self-taught to me. I almost hesitate to say that because it's kind of embarrassing at how not technically proficient I am. I actually did have formal training. I took in high school and all that.

R: When you first started Yawni, did you have a specific vision in mind for what you wanted the band to be?

M: Well, Yawni is kind of a play of off Yoni, which is a symbol of divine feminine. I do feel like the intention with my music has always been to comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable. I have always had a therapeutic, healing mindset when it came to music. We also always had deep roots when it came to punk.

I think, for me, it really has to do with balancing energy. I practice reiki also. I feel like Heart practices Reiki also though I don't think she's actually received reiki. I think that's a kind of stupid formality. I think that's energetic healing. Being a thermostat instead of a thermometer is essentially how I function and how we function as a band.

R: Yeah, you mentioned you were influenced by punk. How did punk cross your path?

M: I first went to my first punk show when I was 12 years old because I have a sister who's older than me because she likes going to punk shows. Her brother is an extremely good musician who, he's actually in a band called Orion and he's signed to Italians Do It Better records. We used to have punk shows in my basement. I started going to punk shows when I was 12 years old, and I started getting addicted to it. 20 years later I'm just as giddy and feel like a little kid when I go to shows and I'm 33 years old.

R: Did you also get influenced by punk rock, Heart?

H: Yeah, I totally loved it. It was great. I loved it. My friends in 8th grade had an older sister, Ramona, the Ramones. That was like the first like, she's a lesbian. Oh wow, to my little 8th grade mind I was like what is that about? What is that? She's got really cool eyeliner. Oh cool. So, we were just listening to everything her sister was listening to, and like, yeah.

R: Wow. So, how long have you been touring, in the big sense? How long have you been bopping around the country, doing this?

M: Well, I think my first official tour was 12 years ago. I've been in a lot of different bands with different names. I've changed my artist name a million times. So, yeah, I've been touring for about 12 years. What about you, Heart?

H: I was only in one other band that toured and that was in the mid-2000s. The last time that toured was 2011.

R: Wow. So, I know doing DIY touring opens up a lot of places that you wouldn't normally intend to go to, necessarily. Haha. So is there anywhere in the country that really touched you or was really impactful for you as a result of you meeting that place while on tour?

M: Honestly, there's so many. The first that comes to mind was probably most mystical experience playing a show was probably Missoula, Montana. That's our goal city. That's our goal city on this tour, to get back there. Just being in Montana was mystical. We rolled up in this punk house and we're just texting them and they're like, we gotta roll back the chicken wire to keep in our adopted pit bull



dogs. We rolled up in our tour bus because I was in a 13-person punk band.

R: Wow.

M: And then we get there and we're hanging out and stuff. We're like, there was this homeless person who really wanted to do a home birth so we had a swimming pool in our living room so we can have a home birth in this living room, and it went great.

She was like, a couple weeks ago, she had a bruise on her face. She told me that she smashed a guy's car intentionally because he was a rapist. I was like, this was just so radical to me. Then I got to play a solo set and people were so engaged. I just felt like I was transcending, you know. In really, real way.

R: What about you, Heart?

H: I honestly don't care about where I am going, I just want to keep going.

R: Sure.

H: I just want to go go go. I really want to, my main goal in life is no paper work and no permanent housing. I don't want to be tied down anywhere I just want to be on the go as much as I can.

R: Sure. Do you share those ambitions, Mary?

M: No.

R: Haha.

M: My thing is we are very Yin and Yang. I love touring. If I had it my way, I would spend half the year touring, pretty much. I am also deeply a homebody. Very, extremely introverted. I do like having a place to call home but honestly, I just love music so much that I really would tour forever if that is what it came down to. It's weird, I don't know how to explain it. It's such a conflict in my heart. If someone was like, do you want to go on tour for three years straight? I would probably be like, yeah.

H: I just like, it's been some years for me since I've signed a lease or anything and I love that feeling. Every time that I've signed that lease, even if it's a month to month, I don't like that hanging over my head where whatever happens I am here all month.

Most of the time, I've been here for way over a year but the idea of that, being bound to some kind of paper, just because I signed some shit. I don't know, I don't want my name on any piece of paper that is looming over me trying to tell me what to do every day.

R: Ok.

H: So, I feel really lucky that I haven't had to sign a lease in years. If I could go the rest of my life never signing anything that dictates where I live, then I'm happy.

CONTINUED



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YAWNI CONTINUED

H: I've been really happy living without my name on everything.

R: Now you mentioned mysticism and mystical experience and also some other spiritual ideas. Who or what has influenced you psychologically and philosophically? I also want to hear that from you, Heart, because your idea of complete non-attachment is interesting to me as well.

H: Well, my dad had two jukeboxes and a huge record collection. It was great to see him enjoy that, and I did get this idea that I know records make my dad happy and I will make a record and will properly earn his love for eternity. Blah blah blah.

H: Here's the thing, we printed a 7" and I showed it to my dad and stuff. By the time that happened he already had dementia and he could've cared less.

R: Ohh.

H: That's ok and stuff.

R: I guess what I'm trying to interrogate here is, where does the desire for complete spontaneity come from?

H: I feel way more manipulative than spontaneous. I feel like I let people think I'm spontaneous but really, I don't want anyone suffocating me in any kind of way. I have a little of that anti-authority kind of stuff because I moved around a lot.

R: We don't have to get into therapy. Haha.

M: I would say for me, personally, we're a very Yin and Yang band. That is our strength. To me, I'm hyper-organized, I'm extremely regimented. It's insane how organized I am and how disciplined I am. Anyone who knows me personally can validate that and Heart is the exact opposite.

R: Yeah.

M: So, even while we're playing music, my practice schedule for us is brutal. We had to reorganize because we actually got to the point where we were burned out. It was getting dangerous for our relationship as friends and mental health. I'm like, we have to get this so perfect and then we have room for noise and chaos.

I think that is the way that the universe operates. I definitely have been into the Upanishads. A.I. Gemini, I actually wrote that song after reading the Upanishads. The Bhagavad Gita, there is creation in destruction. That actually was my senior quote in high school: Destruction is creation. That's a thing I feel deeply to be true. I feel deeply that there needs to be order and chaos. That is the truth.

For us as a band, I think it's demonstrated really well that some of our songs are very structured in a classical, predictable way. There's a level of safety in that that I deeply appreciate because I've had a lot of unsafe

movements in my life where very safe, predictable Americana, Mississippi John hurt or Tom Petty, where it is so structured and predictable. It helped me when I was homeless and I didn't know what was going to happen next. I was in an abusive relationship where I thought the person was going to murder me. Those songs were so helpful at the time.

On the other end of the spectrum where my life was so organized and disciplined, I felt like I desperately needed chaos to survive. I think that the truth of life is both of those things. Inter-are, as Thich Nhất Hạnh would say. There is inter-being in order and chaos. I hope our music expresses that.

R: Would you say that there is intentionality to achieve that when you're setting out to perform or to write?

M: Yes, especially in the form of surrender. I will reveal that part of our band practice ritual is meditation. My meditative stance, because I am type-A, is that I am actually laying on the floor because I'm surrendering. So, that is where the noise part comes in, you're surrendering to what is happening. I'm sure you can appreciate that too. A lot of times no matter how hard you try to get things to be constructive it just isn't. So, you have to surrender to that.

R: It's maddening. You don't want to be the reason that something goes wrong, so you do everything you can so that you're not the reason something goes wrong. But then something goes wrong anyway and then you have to accept it, deal with it, and adapt to it.

M: Yes.

R: So, that makes a lot of sense to me.

H: Yeah yep. Thank you for that.

R: So, gosh. Let's get a little more grounded, maybe. What all instruments can you play, Mary and then Heart.

M: I just want to say for the record that one of our palette cleansers slash rejuvenating practices is that, because the only instrument I was formally trained our rigorously was the drum set. So, Lindsay- Heart- is actually a better guitar player than I can. We do in our private practice time switch instruments. But mainly banjo, guitar, drums, those are the ones I can kind of sing and play.

H: I gotta synthesizer back just this year but I haven't really been playing it much I just kind of put it on loop and listen to it. I played synth in other bands a long time ago. I'm out of practice but I love the sound.

R: Yeah.

H: Yeah, I could probably wing it on anything.

R: Haha.

H: Yeah, I'm not amazing but I could probably come up with a tune on anything.

R: Did either of you play music in school? I mean, I knew you went to Berklee but I'm talking like elementary school band.

H: No.

M: I did. I would do literally anything to play music in my forced incarceration at school. I would do literally anything to play music. I was in jazz band. I was in regular band. I played drums. We had a guitar class. We had music appreciation. Music theory. I took all those classes.

I almost failed music appreciation because I insisted on listening to the entirety of Jimi Hendrix playing the star-spangled banner and I wrote an essay about how it was the most patriotic music in all of American history. My band teacher violently disagreed with me and made me shut it off. I almost got into a physical confrontation with her because she wanted to make me shut it off.

R: Haha.

M: It's long. It's like 17 minutes long. It would've taken up most of the class. She was like you have to turn it off. It's unamerican. I was like no, I'm defending freedom of speech.

R: Oh, my goodness. I'm surprised- I guess I'm not surprised, knowing what I know about a lot

of teachers. But I bet like 1 out of 10 teachers if that had happened, they would've been super into it, you know?

M: Oh yeah, yeah.

H: Yep.

R: Have you formally recorded any albums that you've released?

M: Well, it's been funny. We've had a lot of discussion recently because I've been recording. Even when I was living in a van, in a bar. I mean a real barn with dirt floors and a leaky roof. I've even recorded an album outside. I've always been recording.

We tried going into a studio recently. A really high-quality studio and we did not have the best experience. It wasn't a bad experience. It wasn't the best. We are actually about to rerelease the album that I recorded that we did all the production for called Clean Girls Club. We don't have any physical media so we're going to release it on cassette tape.

R: What would be the best way to contact you or to get that from you?

M: I would say Bandcamp.

YAWN!.bandcamp.com.

R: Y A W N I dot Bandcamp dot com?

M: Yep.

R: So, when do you think this current tour will wind down? Or will it ever?

M: We're on a little bit of a break right now.

We're going to go on a weekend. We're playing a lot of shows regionally, like North Carolina and Tennessee until we go across America starting in April and that will be for one month.

R: Very cool. Is there anything you were hoping I would ask you about haven't covered?

H: If you were a pizza ingredient, what pizza ingredient would you be? I'd be pineapple.

M: I'm vegan so I'd be all the veggies. This is how I order pizza: no cheese, gluten free crust, every veggie you've got. I want a salad on top of the gluten free pizza, no cheese.

R: I think salad is good on a pizza, actually.

Well, gang.

M: Thank you so much.

R: It was a real joy talking to both of you.

M: Thank you so much. I've been reading your magazine and I just want to shout out to my friend RTHBNDR who I used to be in a band in. He gave me a copy of your zone (sic) a while back and he said you should be in this. The universe works out perfectly, I believe.

R: It all works out according to how it works out.

M: Yes, absolutely.

R: It will be out on the first of next month.

Would you mind sending me pictures, photographs of yourself playing? So, I could incorporate them?

M: Oh, sure. Yeah. Do you, how do I find the you find the YouTube part of ISSUES?

R: It's ISSUES Magazine YouTube Channel.

M: Oh ok.

R: I believe if you look at my at IssuesOci Instagram, there's the name of the @ symbol that you put at the end of the YouTube name. Whatever that is called.

M: Yeah. I'm a huge YouTube person. That's very helpful.

R: Excellent. We have interviews up there. I've been taking to filming local shows and putting them up there. We have some of the releases of some of the people I work with on CFR Council, which is how we do booking and stuff.

M: Oh, nice.

R: Yeah, it's a good resource for meeting other people. DIY.

M: Yeah, I'm such a- don't consume social media. I put stuff on there and don't look at it. But I am pretty hardcore about YouTube. That's my vice.

H: Do you do Tik Tok? I live on Tik Tok.



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YAWNI CONCLUDED

R: I do not do Tik Tok, unfortunately. I don't jive with it.
 H: That's better for your brain.
 R: I do watch Tik Toks that other people post on other social media sites sometimes.
 M: Ok.
 R: We just have an Instagram, a Facebook, and a YouTube.
 M: Awesome. That's enough.
 R: I think so. I should get a Myspace.
 M: Yeah. Myspace. My first record is on Myspace only.
 R: Gosh, yeah. I also have recordings I have that only went there and I have no access to anymore. Where does all that go? It's just on some server somewhere.
 H: I have to go but it was nice talking to you. I'll see you next time.
 R: Ok. Thank you so much.
 H: Ok bye.
 M: Thank you so much. Is there anything that I can offer you at this time?
 R: No. I'll get you a free copy of the magazine,

like I said. I'll mail it to you.
 M: Ok.
 R: Ruminates on it. If you decide you want to get a subscription it helps us to print them out. No matter what I'll still give you a copy. It's no big deal.
 M: Ok. Yeah, that's awesome. Yeah, it's that same address for the show.
 R: That was not my house. That was at Pagan Parlor. I live in an art house across town called Purgatory Place.
 M: Oooh OK.
 R: But I can text you the information.
 M: I meant for sending me a copy of the magazine.
 R: Oh, your house? I thought you meant my house.
 M: But you do shows there also?
 R: Yeah. We do shows here once a month, maybe twice a month, usually on a weekend.
 M: Oooh.
 R: Yeah. If you want to hit it up some time in the future text me about that.
 M: Ah. Awesome

I really liked your set. I was deeply meditating and there was a giraffe on the Tv and that's my spirit animal. It was really a mystical moment. I loved it.
 R: Thank you. I am definitely influenced by mysticism and occultism as well. I appreciate you noticing that.
 Well, we have to go, sadly.
 M: Ok. Well, it was such a delight. Thank you for supporting the culture. Even to think of us it really was an honor. I was reading some of your interviews and I thought they were so cool, and I really appreciate your time.
 R: And I appreciate your time as well. Thank you, Mary.
 M: Talk to you later, Ryan Rudolph.
 R: Rudolph Taylor. That's right. You have a good night.
 M Good night. Bye.

-END-

ISSUES INTERVIEW WITH SEPHYR

Sephyr: Hello.
 R: Hi is this Sephyr?
 S: Seph-ere. Hi.
 R: That's fair. How are you doing?
 S: Good. How are you?
 R: I am doing great. Is this a good time?
 S: Yeah. Sorry. I was reading something. I'm just about- you know, ongoing violence happening in Gaza right now. Feeling a lot of sadness. I'm kind of feeling both energies at this moment.
 How are you doing?
 R: I'm doing good. My semester of school is winding up. Or I should say winding down.
 S: Heh.
 R: I'm just enjoying the winter.
 S: What part of the East Coast are you in?
 R: I'm in eastern North Carolina.
 S: Oh wow, ok. Does it snow there?
 R: Rarely. It'll snow once or twice a year.
 S: Oh ok. So, it's not right now, I'm assuming.
 R: No, not at all.
 S: Ok.
 R: Just cold.
 S: I'm so ignorant of when snow happens anywhere on the East Coast. I think I know what happens to New York. Aren't the two kinds of close together?
 R: North Carolina

and New York? Yeah. Probably like 500 miles maybe more.
 S: Ok.
 R: So, I'm going to record this. Just so you know.
 S: Ok.
 R: It's going to end up in Number 81 which will be released on February 1.
 S: Ok.
 R: Later after that we'll release it on our YouTube channel also. The audio.
 S: OK, cool.
 R: Otherwise, it'll be a print edition. I'll be happy to send you out a copy when it comes out for free.
 S: I would love that.
 R: So, Sephyr, tell me about yourself. Where are you?
 S: I am in Los Angeles, California. What about myself? I am an artist. A visual artist, a recording artist, a conceptual artist, and a performance artist. My whole life and existence is kind of centered around art.
 R: What's the name of your primary project?
 S: My project is called The Bedroom Witch. I started that. I've been recording music. The project is kind of a synth-pop darkwave goth kind of inspired electronic project. I kind of played around with sounds like that since I was a teenager. I worked

around a drum machine, and synthesizers. I was kind of gifted to work around. I started recording music. Trying to sculpt a sound that made sense to me. I think I went through a lot of iterations of sound to get to that point.

It's always kind of existed on the minor scale of sonic soundscapes. I lay out my ideas on there.
 R: How old were you when you initially started playing an instrument or programming?
 S: I started playing instruments when I was 5 years old, maybe 6. My mom and my dad were both musicians. My mother teaches piano, voice, and setar which is a Persian six-string instrument that she grew up learning in Iran. When I was around 5, maybe even 4 years old, she got me on the wheel of understanding music, and playing melodies on the piano.

I was introduced to music pretty early. I would say that by the time I was 8 or 9 years old, I was writing a lot of corny, angsty pre-middle school poetry that to me were song

lyrics. I wasn't actually writing music on top of it. I was writing and hearing melodies and percussion in my head. I was getting my older sister to film me singing those songs without any music. They were my pretend music videos. I was really good at playing pretend while simultaneously learning and teaching myself how to sculpt the lessons about music into a personal relationship to it. Do you know what I mean?
 R: Yeah. It sounds pretty advanced for someone who was 8 or 9 years old. What inspired you to start writing your own lyrics that young?
 S: I really have to tap into that for a second. I think that I was always a very expressive kid. I had a lot of hyperactive, maybe even rage issues. I was an angry kid. I would throw a lot of tantrums. I didn't know how to relax. That was a huge problem for me as a child. I've calmed down so much since then. My origin story is centered around this indescribable rage. Kind of like without language to communicate or



understand where that rage was coming from. Where a lot of sadness was coming from. I felt misunderstood all the time.



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SEPHYR CONTINUED

S: I understand where I used lyric writing as a way to say, I would say, the rudest things that I could think of at that age. I recently found this notebook of lyrics that I wrote in 5th or 6th grade and it was at my parent's house, and I was just sorting things from the past. I found this notebook and I was reading through this, and I walked about wow, I talked about harming people. I talked about dying. I talked about reincarnation and things about that. I don't even know where they were coming from, but I think that a lot of it was speaking to a person who was really drawn to macabre things.

R: Did you grow up in Los Angeles?

S: I did. I was born in Iran. When I was 2 years old my parents made the decision to emigrate to the United States. We stopped in Austria for, what I understood was either 3 months or a 6-month period when I was a baby. That was the halfway point for when we settled in Los Angeles.

R: Hmm.

S: Yeah.

R: Did you go to public school? Were you encountering regular kids on a regular basis other than yourself?

S: Yeah. I went to public school.

We started off in the Melrose area. I don't know if you're familiar with Los Angeles neighborhoods or locations.

R: Not off the top of my head, no.

S: Pretty much started off in this one-bedroom apartment. Part of the reason why we moved to Los Angeles. We already had family members who had immigrated around the Iranian revolution in '79. A lot of the Iranian diaspora is centered around Iranian people leaving in '79, or early 80s but we had a delayed relationship to that. This was the 90s at this point.

We started off in Melrose. We ended up in the Beverly Hills school district. Ended up in one-bedroom apartments and two-bedroom apartments.

R: When did other people's music start being impactful for you?

S: Honestly, forever. I always felt impacted by music. I didn't have much of a means at an early age of finding my own music. A lot of it was reliant on the radio and the car. What I decided to play in my classrooms or on cable television.

My early relationship to music was kind of this duality of what my parents were listening to and playing.

They were both musicians and composed traditional Iranian music.

Simultaneously being in a car and sometimes Britney Spears came on the radio, or Born to Make You Happy, or Genie in a Bottle by Christian Aguilera. Music like that. 90s pop star. I was always more drawn to the women in pop music. Anytime I heard a Britney song or a TLC song, girl groups, or Christina Aguilera, music like that kind of infiltrated my psyche at a young age. Which makes sense to me now in terms of the pop structure that I exist in right now.

R: When did you start producing your own- I should ask you, you compose music electronically, right?

S: Right.

R: When did you start developing that particular style?

S: Around 16. 15 or 16. When I had two things that were important to this electronic journey for me. One was an Electribe. My sister's friend left me with her. My older sister who was in college when I was in high school. She came back and introduced me to it. I was beginning to learn about different electronic projects. A major influence on me when I was in middle school, and early high school, was The Knife. Specifically, the Silent Shelf project. Or album. That album did a lot for me as a kid. Which was like wow, there are these projects that are kind of more underground, they rely on weirder sounds, stranger vocal effects, and are so much more experimental with ideas around production. My mind was just blown. A whole world opened up for me.

I'm a little scatterbrained when I talk at length.

R: You're fine.

S: I was gifted a drum machine. I was gifted a MicroKORG synthesizer. I already had a laptop computer with GarageBand on it. I realized that I could just sit down and record straight into it with a synthesizer

and drum machine. It's kind of like an analog to digital to electronic music. I didn't start off learning the software recording. That's something that came to me later in life. I just knew that I could manipulate sounds on a synthesizer and drum machine and record it straight into a computer.



R: Alright.

S: That was kind of my first introduction. I was borrowing from so many different artists stylistically. Kind of copying artists when I was growing up. Kind of copying structures and even melodies sometimes. I was even copying melodies. I was training my mind and wiring my mind to understand. Like the training wheels effect for my own project later on.

R: I see.

S: Yeah.

R: Do you perform out much?

S: Do I perform out much?

R: Yeah. Do you get out and go on stage and perform live?

S: Yeah. Not as much as I used to. I think the pandemic kind of a) changed my relationship to live performance and also at the same time I was a lot more willing to do live shows before the pandemic happened.

I think that COVID and the first two years of the pandemic were so dark and awful for people. I focus on production. I focus so much more on being a producer and that's something that I didn't feel like in my early adult life. I didn't feel like I had much time or energy or space as much as I had during the pandemic. With life, expectations and jobs, and everything.

It was kind of constantly infiltrating my psychic and artistic realm I felt that I didn't have space to explore that as much.

One thing that I was gifted with during that time was when I was exploring my options and my experimentation. I was focusing so much more on who I am as a producer Moreso than the spectacle of me being an artist.

R: I understand.

S: Yeah.

R: How did you get connected to Ratskin?

S: I got connected to Ratskin through. I looked at this first one as multiple things. My friend Akiko who runs a sister label called Psychic Eye Records. They're also partners with the person who runs Ratskin Records, Mikey.

I released one Bedroom Witch album with Akiko in 2019.

CONTINUED



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SEPHYR CONTINUED

S: It was an album called *Diaspora*. I've always known. I feel like I should give more of an origin story. I lived in the Bay Area which is where both Ratskin Records and Psychic Eye Records are located.

I lived in the Bay Area in 2010 for a few years. That was the time when I was releasing *Bedroom Witch* songs. I started calling myself that name and releasing music under that name. Sharing it on Soundcloud. I don't know, I guess Facebook was a thing at the time.

I had been performing and making friends through the music scene. My sister was and is involved in the art and music scene there and she'd introduced me to a lot of people. In a lot of ways, both Ratskin and Psychic Eye were on my radar in later years. When I got in touch with Akiko and we decided to work together to help me to release, I want to say *Diaspora* is my fourth *Bedroom Witch* album. We did that and

the closer we got and the more connected we got we decided that the last album we released would be Psychic Eye Records. Not Ratskin Records. That's kind of like the origin story.

R: No. That covers it. So, what are you working on now?

S: Right now, actually today I was working on vocals. I'm currently working on another full-length album. I can't think too much now in terms of wherever this album is going. If you listen to that last album something happens that I think. I should give more context. The *Bedroom Witch* is this ongoing lore. It's a creation myth. One thing that happens in that record in the very last song there is a death. In that death, I'm having a creative rebirth, if that makes sense.

R: Sure.

S: I'm following along in the creative rebirth of what happened in that album. I'm not a very linear person but part of this non-linearity is to identify and

understand my relationship to concepts around rebirth and reincarnation. The concept of the phoenix rising from the ashes. I'm looking into what that means to me, what it means to wake up in a dystopia, and kind of look at the dystopia as a rebirth. How does a past life connection communicate and relate to a current life connection? How can we capture him in between, you know? I'm sorry if I'm speaking in vague abstracts.

R: That sounds very interesting to me.

S: If you need clarification on anything I'm happy to describe it. To clarify what I'm describing, I'm working on a new record.

R: OK. Very good. Is there anything specifically that you would like to promote?

S: Right now, I do not have anything that I would like to personally promote. One thing that I would like to say is that Psychic Eye, Ratskin, and my *Bedroom Witch* project put a lot of love and care into the last project that I released called *A Place of Hurt* which is out on both Ratskin Records and Psychic Eye Records. It's out on vinyl. It has been out on vinyl and CD and for digital download. I'm so thankful to that project and to my friends and the people who worked on that project. My friends support me. Akiko and Mikey did so much. I feel like I will always promote that record. We still have vinyl for sale. One thing I would like to end on a note of is I would like to talk about is the world. I would love to see above all else, I would love to see a free Palestine, a free Congo, and a free Sudan. That's where my mind is at for promotion right now.

R: Alright. For the last question, is there anything you were hoping to have included in this interview that I haven't asked you about?

S: Um. I don't think so. I think that whatever I'm asked I'm willing to share. Something that I think about a lot when it comes to my artistry is I'm always fascinated when people are curious about lyrics and people are curious about instrumental choices. I'm kind of a producer geek in those ways. I like talking about what the technicalities are, but I am also interested in what the metaphors are. I don't know if you noticed but I feel like I'm stuck in that place when I think about art and music.

CONTINUED



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SEPHYR CONCLUDED

R: You've spoken in a lot of symbolic language throughout.
S: Yeah. Definitely.
R: Perhaps some of it needs to be read more than once to get what you are getting at. I've appreciated it. I like your

thoughtfulness in your approach. I like the fact that you are intending to do something rather than playing it completely by accident.
S: Rather than what?
R: Rather than playing it completely by accident.
S: Thank you for taking

the time to exist in the work with me and talk about it and talk about origins and things like that. I appreciated it.
R: Absolutely. And Like I said this will be the print version of February 1. Sometime after that would be audio.

Would it be possible for you to send some photographs to me?
S: Yeah, of course.
R: Could I give you the email or do you have the email?
S: I think I have it from when we were connected if that's

the right one.
R: CFRIssuesmagazine@gmail.com.
S: Yeah, and can you remind me of your name one more time?
R: Ryan.
S: It was nice talking to

you, Ryan.
R: It was nice talking to you too.
S I hope you have a good night.
R: You too.
S: Bye.

-END-

P R O M P T

BY CARL KRUGER WITH A/I

1. Compose a three-sentence short story about pride in the style of Jimmy Swaggart.
Brother James stood on the pulpit, his voice thundering like a Southern storm, preaching the gospel of pride to the congregation. Drenched in the spotlight's glow, he declared that righteousness was his armor, and arrogance his shield. As the organ played a triumphant hymn, Brother James left the stage with a fervent swagger, convinced that his pride was the path to salvation.
2. Compose a three-sentence short story about greed in the style of Pope Boniface VIII.

In the grand halls of Vatican City, Cardinal Alessandro, consumed by insatiable greed, plotted to amass wealth beyond earthly measure. With a miter adorned with golden threads, he schemed in the shadows, orchestrating financial maneuvers to fill the papal coffers. As the echoes of indulgence reverberated through the corridors, Cardinal Alessandro believed that earthly riches were divine blessings, oblivious to the moral toll his avaricious pursuits took on the sanctity of his office.

3. Compose a three-sentence short story about wrath in the style of Jesus of Nazareth.

In the quiet village of Bethsaida, a gentle carpenter named Jacob

witnessed injustice that ignited a flame of righteous anger within him. Seeing the downtrodden oppressed by the powerful, he overturned the tables of the money-changers in the temple,

proclaiming that his Father's house should be a haven for prayer, not a den of thieves. With compassion in his eyes, he implored the people to embrace love and mercy, teaching that true wrath is reserved for those who forsake justice and kindness.

4. Compose a three-sentence short story about envy in the style of Francis of Assisi.

In the serene hills of Assisi, Brother Giovanni struggled with envy as he gazed upon the bountiful harvest of a neighboring farmer. Torn by the green-eyed monster, he sought solace in prayer and contemplation under the shade of an olive tree. Eventually, inspired by the spirit of St. Francis, Brother Giovanni found joy in the simplicity of brotherhood, realizing that contentment blossoms when one's heart is free from the thorns of envy.

5. Compose a three-sentence short story about lust in the style of Pope Benedict IX.

In the opulent chambers of the Vatican, a young cardinal named Luca found himself entangled in the web of forbidden desire. Haunted by the allure of fleeting pleasures, he grappled with the conflicting vows of chastity and the seductive whispers that echoed through the corridors of power.

As the stained-glass windows bore witness, Luca's internal struggle mirrored the dichotomy between earthly passions and heavenly devotion in the sacred heart of Rome.

6. Compose a three-sentence short story about gluttony in the style of St. Thomas More.

In the bustling streets of Tudor England, Sir Robert, a portly merchant, reveled in extravagant feasts and indulged his gluttonous desires. Surrounded by lavish banquets, he feasted with a voracious appetite, his table adorned with excesses that mocked the virtue of temperance. As the echoes of revelry reverberated, Sir Robert's opulence became a reflection of a society entangled in the moral pitfalls of unchecked appetite and the erosion of virtuous living.

7. Compose a three-sentence short story about sloth in the style of Erasmus.

In the tranquil town of Desidia, a lethargic scribe named Benedictus found refuge in the solace of idleness, neglecting his duties and the pursuit of knowledge.

As the quill lay dormant and the parchment remained untouched, the once vibrant scriptorium echoed with the silence of intellectual stagnation. Benedictus' slothful ways became a cautionary tale, illustrating the perils of neglecting the divine gift of intellect and the responsibility to cultivate wisdom.

8. Compose a three-sentence short story about ego in the style of Thomas Aquinas.

In the medieval halls of scholarly debate, Brother Ambrose, puffed up with intellectual pride, sought to assert his theological prowess over his brethren. Blind to the unity of knowledge and humility, he engaged in relentless arguments, dividing the sacred discourse with the poison of ego. As the dust settled in the scriptorium, Brother Ambrose's inflated pride stood as a testament to the perilous path of intellectual arrogance, overshadowing the pursuit of truth and unity in divine wisdom.

9. Compose a three-sentence short story about avarice in the style of Martin Luther.

In the bustling market square of Wittenberg, a moneylender named Heinrich amassed wealth through usury, exploiting the vulnerable in the name of earthly gain. Driven by the insatiable appetite for gold, his heart became a haven for the sin of avarice,

eclipsing the teachings of charity and mercy. As the echoes of discontent reverberated, Heinrich's ill-gotten riches bore witness to the corruption that Luther decried, a stark reminder of the spiritual toll exacted by the love of worldly possessions.

10. Compose a three-sentence short story about hubris in the style of Jim Bakker.

In the televangelist empire of prosperity preaching, Reverend Richard, adorned in flashy suits and surrounded by opulence, believed his success was a divine validation of his infallible connection to God. With a charismatic swagger, he flaunted his wealth as proof of righteousness, blind to the shadows cast by his hubris. As the congregation marveled at his prosperity gospel, Reverend Richard's unchecked pride led him down a path of moral bankruptcy, where the pursuit of earthly riches overshadowed the humility preached by the Savior.

-END-



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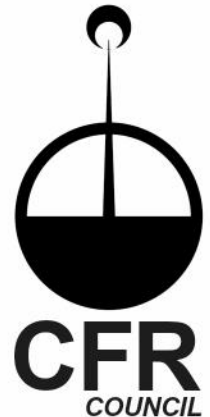
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